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Project status

by Kirsten Dyhr-Mikkelsen, NEE

We were very pleased with the quality and creativity presented in the collages submitted to our international Active Learning competition. On behalf of the project team, I would like to thank all participants. Normally, we only get to see what is happening in our own country so it was very fun to get a glimpse of what has been going on in all the Active Learning countries.

The **first prize** went to 4th grade, École du Chant d'Oiseau, Brussels, Belgium and consisted of a 5-pack Energy Lab LEGO set. The award ceremony was visited by the EU Technical Officer of the AL project.

Second prize was given to 3rd grade, Reformed College and Elementary School, Pécs, Hungary who received Kids4Energy role playing cards.

The **third prize** went to 7th grade, Hallermoen School, Drammen, Norway who was given Save Power flash light that charge as you shake them.

Obstacles are merely challenges waiting to be overcome

It has proven more difficult than anticipated for the pupils to gain access

to the energy metres in order to read the consumption themselves.

In some schools it is considered too dangerous to allow the pupils near the metres given their location. This problem can be overcome by for example letting the school janitor carry out the meter readings. Other schools found that the energy companies or owners of the school buildings would not let anyone else read the meters but themselves.

In France, some of the Champion Schools encountered a different problem, namely that the school did not have its own individual meter but own a joint meter with several other public buildings. The following article shows how this obstacle was turned in to a learning experience.

What is next?

All Champion Schools have been asked to evaluate pupil response to the activities and the teachers have been asked for feedback on the use of the toolbox. We are currently collecting evaluation data from all schools in order to assess whether the impact of the Active Learning activities can be measured in hard numbers. We will also be looking at the data submitted to the website www.sustain.no for international comparison purposes.

Active Learning in France – a story about meters

by Therese Kreitz, ADEME, Valbonne, France

Monitoring school energy consumption appeared to be a mountain impossible to climb for most of the French Champion School teachers. Why was that the case? One explanation is that the responsibility for buildings themselves including the energy meters resides under authorities different from those who occupy the buildings, for example, the local town or the Ministry for Education. Therefore, 8 out of 9 French schools participating in the project had no access to the meter.

What did they do?

Unfortunately, most of them gave up due to lack of time. But two persevered! This was the case of Isabelle Delaforge, head master and teacher at 'Ecole Edouard Branly' in Longpré les Corps Saints, a small village.

Her problem was that their school consumption is not registered separately but instead together with the consumption of the town hall, the primary school, and the computer room.

Furthermore, the school oil tank was filled up at irregular intervals making it close to impossible to judge consumption in relation to activity level and weather conditions. But Mrs. Delforge did not give up. She tried to change the situation and if that failed to make the most of the situation.

First, Mrs. Delaforge made an appointment for herself and the class with the Mayor to resolve the oil tank problem. The Mayor agreed to let the fuel tank be filled up cyclically. This was already a first success!!

Next, a lesson was transformed into a lesson of citizenship where the pupils debated possible next steps:

What could they do to persuade the Mayor to replace the general meter with individual meters? Make another appointment, write a letter? Why does all this take so much

time? What is the decision path for a Mayor? Can they influence it? The Mayor is appointed through election and is often in a small village close by. Therefore, Mrs. Delaforge was very optimistic that their efforts would be crowned with success ... maybe next year.

Emanuel Petit, teacher at the primary school in Conty took the same approach. He and his pupils also wrote a letter to the Mayor. Unfortunately, their effort was less successful. The reply was that the meter was common to several buildings and that a division was impossible. End of story.

Having experienced trouble in getting access to the meter readings necessary to do energy monitoring, several teachers got discouraged and gave up on the entire idea of energy monitoring.

The two examples above, however, show that with a bit of ingenuity such an obstacle can be turned into a learning experience. Furthermore, their requests for access will most likely contribute to the process of making individual meter reading available to all building users.

AL competition winner

by Yveline Wigny, ABEA

The 26th June 2008 was the most important day of the year for the children of 'Chant d'Oiseau' school in Brussels: It was the day of their evaluation report ceremony.

On that very same day 'Chant d'Oiseau' school officially received the 1st prize for the Active Learning international competition, in front of a public of more than 450 people! Present were the mayor, many political personalities and headmasters, teachers and parents.



Parents and local representatives

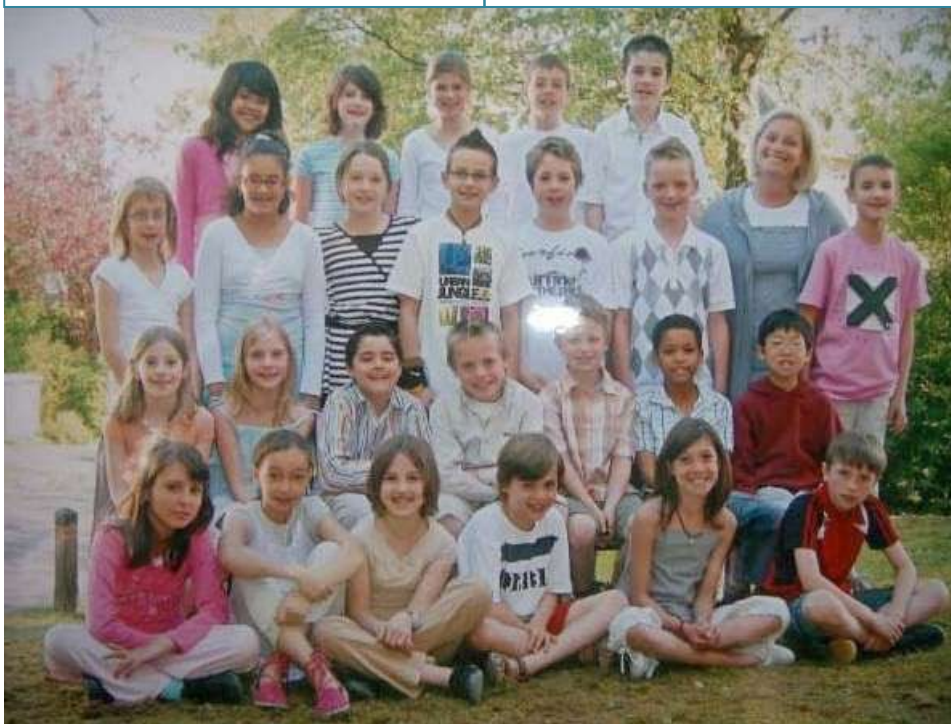
The children presented their project and sang the European anthem.

What's more, Bernd Decker, Project Officer at the European Commission, handed over the prize to the children.



The school received 5 Lego boxes to build a town supplied with renewable energies. What a special moment for the children!

But it was also an important and exciting moment for the headmaster and the teachers, who worked with the children on the Active Learning project they're so proud of.



4th grade
« École du Chant d'Oiseau »
Brussels, Belgium
Teacher: Valérie Demey



4^e grade
« École du Chant d'Oiseau »
Brussels, Belgium

Their collage represents a windmill in a poppy field, and the blades are flower petals. It is a very elegant and poetic work.

What's more important, the children decided to continue with their project: During the school year a pupil named "Mr. Energy" will each day make a reading of indoor temperature several times during the day and check the heaters at specific times. Another pupil named "Mr. Light" will observe how long the light is on each day in certain rooms. The class will thus continue to keep the energy consumption under control!

AL as spare-time entertainment

by Juraj Krivošik, SEVEN

In the Czech Republic one of the Champion Schools is not an ordinary school but a non-governmental organisation named 'Občanská Inspirace' (Civic Inspiration) that provides free-time environmental education, especially for socially disadvantaged families with the aim to teach these families ecofriendly behaviour in everyday life.

Two teachers at 'Občanská Inspirace' took part in the Active Learning teacher training provided by SEVEN and then

developed a set of Active Learning based courses for children aged 6-9 and children aged 10-15, as well as educational workshops for the local public (i.e. children with their families).

Weekly free-time courses (every week) for children aged 6-15

The courses were built around a number of the activities proposed in the Active Learning toolbox. In addition to 'Guardian of the light', 'CO₂ footprint of the journey from home to school', and 'Monitoring school energy consumption', other AL activities were modified to fit the special purposes of 'Občanská Inspirace'.



Weekly spare-time course in energy monitoring

The focus was on creative, if possible outdoor, activities, since the courses were offered as a spare-time activity and as such the children expected funny activities with a high level

of entertainment. The learning will happen indirectly as a consequence of the fun activities. The children are then expected to return home and share their new experiences and knowledge with their peers and families.

Outdoor Eco-day with about 150 participants

The specialist from 'Občanská Inspirace' developed an innovative community education strategy for educating the local public. A one day program aimed at attracting local public to finding non-standard ways of life invited children and their families to participate in ten workshops. Each workshop had a special topic with practical hands-on examples and activities providing information about environmental protection.

The AL toolbox activities were adapted to suit the different needs of the groups that covered different age levels and abilities. The concept was to make children and adults cooperate while completing the workshop tasks.

A partnership between the local non-governmental sector, the local community, city-representatives and local media was established which helped to promote planned public workshops.

The **Active Learning** project is an exciting 3-year European project based on the idea that children aged 6-12 years play an important role in sustainable development, and that pupils learn more and the knowledge is retained longer if they experience things first hand. Our Active Learning toolbox contains exciting activities that can be used to teach energy efficiency and renewable energy topics.

The Active Learning toolbox materials can be downloaded free of charge at

Why not try it out now?



Outdoor activity on the sources of energy

Altogether 175 children and their families in the 'Černý Most' housing estate took part in the activities. The activities created an interest and awareness of how to make environmental protection part of the routines of every-day life that can help these socially disadvantaged families reduce their energy bill leading to financial savings as well as at the same time doing their bit for global environment protection.



Housing estate Černý Most, Prague

This example shows that not only schools but also NGO's can play a significant role in an education strategy and that Active Learning activities are well suited for learning both during school hours and in the spare-time.

More information can be obtained by contacting the consortium partner representing your country:

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